

The primary reference to Kunio et al. was relied upon for teaching first the phenolization of the lignocellulose, then reacting this with phenol. The weight percentages for the reactive phenol in the Abstract of the reference were referred to as being those recited and claimed by Applicants.

It is noted by Applicants in the application specification, see pages 12-14, for example, that in general when phenol is used as a reactive substance to a phenolized biomass substance as in the primary reference to Kunio, et al., a softening point of the phenolized biomass substance can be lowered. However, when phenolized biomass resin composition containing phenol is cured by using a curing agent such as hexamethylenetetramine, phenol accelerates decomposition of hexamethylenetetramine, and makes a curing reaction rate of the phenolized biomass resin composition increase as a whole, which results in lowering the processability of the composition and properties of the cured article.

In order to solve the above problems, according to the present invention, by adding the specific phenol derivatives in the phenolized biomass resin composition, a phenolized biomass resin composition becomes excellent in properties such as flowability, processability and properties after curing. The secondary references to Novotny, et al. and Tsujimoto, et al. do not render obvious, 35 U.S.C. §103, the present invention when considered with Kunio, et al.

Novotny, et al. disclose phenol derivatives, those phenol derivatives, however, are not the specific phenol derivatives in the present invention, i.e., butylphenol, octylphenol, nonylphenol, benzylphenol or benzyl phenol ether. Though Tsujimoto, et al. disclose the same specific derivatives as those in the

present invention, the phenol derivatives in Tsujimoto, et al. are added as a reactant to lignocellulose material which is un-phenolized biomass substance. Namely, the phenol derivatives in Tsujimoto, et al. are not added to the phenolized biomass substance as in Applicants' invention as recited in the application claims as amended.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious, 35 U.S.C. §103, that the claimed specific phenol derivatives are added to the phenolized biomass substance of Kunio, et al. even by referring to Novotny, et al. and Tsujimoto, et al. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, and 5-13 is requested.

Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 512.43705X00) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments